

SOUTHWEST FISHERIES SCIENCE CENTER
SECOND QUARTER REPORT-FY 2001
For the Period January 1 - March 31, 2001

SUBMITTED BY: John R. Hunter, Division Director, Fisheries Resources Division

Title of Accomplishment or Milestone: Analysis of vessel harvesting capacity in the CPS finfish and squid fisheries to determine optimum limited entry target fleet sizes.

Current Status of Accomplishment or Milestone: Analysis completed for the CPS finfish fishery; analysis for squid fishery conducted for vessels holding finfish limited entry permits; the full analysis of harvesting capacity in squid fishery awaiting CDF&G decisions regarding squid limited entry.

Background: Concerned that the number of vessels that were expected to qualify for a limited entry CPS finfish permit would result in excess harvesting capacity in the fishery, the Pacific Fishery Management Council directed the Coastal Pelagics Species Management Team to conduct an analysis on establishing a harvesting capacity goal for the limited entry (L.E.) finfish fishery. The analysis would also address other capacity related issues such as permit transferability, and harmonization of finfish limited entry with California's pending limited entry program for the market squid fishery.

Purpose of Activity: To identify a preferred harvesting capacity goal for the CPS finfish fishery and the fleet capable of achieving that goal under normal conditions, with a reserve harvesting capacity associated with some peak availability of fish, unique environmental conditions which enhance effort production, or peak demand for output.

Description of Accomplishment (e.g., to the Center, to Management, and to NMFS Strategic Plan Goals) and significant results: The analysis found that under what might be considered typical or normal operating conditions -- harvesting capacity based on average finfish landings per trip and average number of finfish trips per year -- the 65 vessels initially comprising the finfish limited entry fleet would have sufficient capacity to harvest the expected long-term average aggregate finfish harvest target level (110,000 mt annually), which was deemed a reasonable capacity goal for the fishery. This 65 vessel fleet would also have peak capacity -- harvesting capacity based on maximum finfish landings per trip and maximum number of finfish trips taken per year -- to harvest the maximum potential amount of finfish (275,000 mt annually), that amount associated with peak period availability of fish, environmental conditions which are most favorable to effort production, and peak demand for output. This "excess capacity" could otherwise be directed towards the harvest of squid and tuna.

Significance of Accomplishment: It is important to note that the ability of vessels participating in the CPS finfish fishery to harvest alternate species alleviates the need to reduce the size of the limited entry fleet. CPS finfish purse seine fisheries off California are flexible and accommodate significant changes in resource availability and market demand. When CPS finfish are unavailable or market conditions for CPS finfish are not

favorable, CPS purse seine vessels tend to switch to alternative species, primarily market squid, tunas, and herring, and utilize capacity that otherwise might be considered latent in the CPS finfish fishery.

Problems: None

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